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ABSTRACT

Results and procedures of a job analysis for the position of entry-level health services administrator (HSA) are summarized. Study objectives were as follows: to identify the tasks done by entry-level HSAs; to rate the importance of each task; to classify related tasks into categories, called "job dimensions"; to identify the skills and the knowledge required for competent performance of the tasks in each job dimension; and to determine the degree of expertise in each skill and area of knowledge required of an entry-level HSA. The 10 job dimensions (e.g., policy and operations direction, financial management), each illustrated by a task, 21 knowledge areas, and 18 skills/abilities are listed. The job analysis was based on the advice of an advisory committee of nine experts in health services administration. After a preliminary list of HSA tasks and and qualifications was developed, the experts independently rated the importance of each task. The experts then discussed their opinions at a meeting, attempting to resolve any important disagreements. Independent ratings were again obtained to serve as the basis for the role delineation. Details of the study methodology are specified, and the products of the study are noted. It is suggested that the job analysis can serve as the basis for future activities in a credentialing/continuing compentency system supported by the Bureau of Health Professions of the U.S. Public Health Service. (SW)

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HRP-0902746

ED200092

INITIAL ROLE DELINEATION FOR ENTRY-LEVEL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION PERSONNEL

Executive Summary of the Final Report

Covers Period of Performance
During
October 1, 1979 - December 31, 1980
Contract No. HRA-232-79-0119

Contractor
Center for Occupational and Professional Assessment
Educational Testing Service
Princeton, New Jersey 08541
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Sponsor

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1. Purpose of the Study

This report describes the procedure and the results of a role delineation study (i.e., a job analysis) for the role of entry-level health services administrators (HSA), conducted for the Bureau of Health Professions by Educational Testing Service (ETS). This study can serve as the basis for future activities in a credentialing/continuing competency system supported by the Bureau of Health Professions. The competence of health personnel is integral to the goal of improving the cost-effectiveness of the nation's health care system. Cost-effective health care requires competent administration, which, in turn, requires effective training and, if desired by the professions, a credentialing/competency system for entry-level administrators. The training will be effective and the credentialing will be valid only if they emphasize the knowledge and skills necessary for competent performance of the important tasks of the job. The purpose of a role delineation study is to identify these tasks and the required knowledge and skills.

The specific objectives of the study were

--to identify the tasks done by entry-level HSA's;

--to rate the importance of each task;

--to classify related tasks into categories, called "job dimensions";

--to identify the skills and the knowledge required for competent performance of the tasks in each job dimension; and

--to determine the degree of expertise in each skill and area of knowledge required of an entry-level HSA.

The term "task" refers to an action with an observable product. The skills and areas of knowledge required will be referred to as "qualifications." Thus, the

first phase of the study concentrated on tasks, while the second phase concentrated on qualifications.

2. Methodology

An Advisory Committee of nine experts in health services administration provided the expertise necessary for this study. The experts represented a variety of health services settings and educational backgrounds and each had many years of experience in health services administration. Their participation in each of the two major phases of the study followed a three-step sequence:

1. ETS collected the experts' individual opinions by mail.
2. The experts discussed their opinions at a meeting, attempting to resolve any important disagreements.
3. ETS again collected the experts' individual opinions by mail. This second set of opinions served as the basis for the role delineation.

The full procedure of the study consisted of the following specific steps:

—ETS and the Bureau of Health Professions recruited the Advisory Committee.

—Staff members of ETS and the Bureau reviewed existing written materials containing information about the role of HSA.

—ETS developed a preliminary list of HSA tasks, grouped into job dimensions.

—ETS developed a preliminary list of the qualifications required of an entry-level HSA.

—The Advisory Committee members independently rated the importance of each task.

--The Advisory Committee met as a group to revise the task list and to discuss the task importance ratings.

--The Advisory Committee members again independently rated the importance of each task.

--The Advisory Committee members independently identified the qualifications (skills and areas of knowledge) required for the tasks in each job dimension.

--The Advisory Committee met as a group to revise the qualifications list and discuss the qualifications required.

--The Advisory Committee members independently rated the degree of expertise required in each qualification, for the tasks of each job dimension.

--ETS staff members summarized the Advisory Committee's judgments in the form of competency statements.

One problem complicating the study was diversity--the fact that some tasks are done by HSA's in some institutional settings but not in others. Consequently, the task list developed in this study is intended to include all tasks done by HSA's in any institutional setting. The diversity was reflected in the differences between Advisory Committee members in their ratings of the importance of each task.

3. The Products of the Study

The products of the study included:

--a list of 132 tasks grouped into 10 job dimensions;

--ratings of the importance of each task;

--a list of 39 qualifications: 21 areas of knowledge and 18 skills or abilities;

—ratings of the level of expertise required in each qualification for performance of the tasks in each job dimension;

—159 competency statements, each one describing and summarizing the judgments about one of the qualifications relative to one of the job dimensions.

The Job Dimensions

The following list presents the ten job dimensions, each with one of the tasks included as an example.

1. Overall direction--policy
   (Example: Interpret and transmit policies, procedures, and regulations between governing board and operating staff)
2. Overall direction--operations
   (Example: Direct and coordinate general administrative services)
3. Financial management
   (Example: Analyze expenditures)
4. Human resources management
   (Example: Develop and implement personnel recruiting and selection methods)
5. Information systems and data analysis
   (Example: Assemble and present comparison data for considering alternatives)
6. Public and community activities
   (Example: Conduct and/or participate in public meetings on community health concerns)

7. Health industry activities

   (Example: Communicate health care needs to and learn health care needs from persons external to the organization by attending meetings and seminars, symposia, conventions, etc.)

8. Legal issues and government related activities

   (Example: Review and analyze proposed legislation)

9. Educational development

   (Example: Develop, direct, and maintain an in-service training program)

10. Program review and evaluation

    (Example: Prepare periodic evaluation reports to governing bodies of progress and activities of the organization)

The following list presents the 39 qualifications identified as necessary for competent performance.

The Areas of Knowledge

Issues in health services

Health service organizations

Health planning methodology

Public health

Health economics

Regional planning

Organization theory and principles of administration

Personnel management

Finance of health services

Sociology

Human behavior

Information systems

Research design and program evaluation

Communications

Group dynamics

Education and training techniques

Legal aspects of health services

Grantsmanship and grant management

Political institutions and processes

Accreditation and licensure

The Skills and Abilities

Learning ability

Oral communication

Written communication

Reading comprehension

Leadership

Stability

Quality of judgment

Planning and organizing work

Interpersonal skills

Analysis and synthesis

Problem-solving approach to decision making

Implementation of plans and decisions

Supervision and control

Adaptive ability

Group process skills

Political acumen

Community organization and education

Act independently

4. Summary and Recommendations

In summary, a comprehensive list of competencies required for competent entry-level performance as a health services administrator has been developed. These competencies are linked to the important tasks of the job at entry-level.

The diversity of task importance arising from the diversity of institutional settings remains a complicating problem in interpreting the results of the study. There is a degree of agreement among the Advisory Committee members as to what are the important tasks and qualifications of the job. This agreement is demonstrated in the observed ratings among the committee members. But, there was disagreement on ratings for as many tasks and qualifications as there was agreement. The disagreement may be attributable to the diversity of settings. Further study will be required to identify the sources of variance.

The logical next step, in the on-going process of improving cost-effectiveness of the nation's health care system, is a research study with a large sample of administrators from all segments of the field of health services administration to verify the results of the study. Job analytic data can be analyzed by demographic variables such as experiential background, age, institutional setting, education, management level, etc. to identify the sources of variation in the job data.

The results of the role verification could be used by educators to evaluate current curricula and teaching strategies. Further study could lead to the development of self-assessment instruments and self-administered educational modules for practitioners to use to enhance their own competencies.